

Message Text

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TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 269680

NODIS

FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 33106 SENT ACTION SECSTATE IMMEDIATE NOV 11

QUOTE: S E C R E T PARIS 33106

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A SMALL LUNCHEON ATTENDED
BY DENIAU, SOUTOU, FRANCOIS-PONCET AND THEIR WIVES
THE FOLLOWING MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE WERE DISCUSSED:
PRESIDENT'S TRIP, THE MIDDLE EAST, FRENCH ACTIONS
AND VIEWS ON THE POLISARIO HOSTAGES, SALT, A BREZHNEV
LETTER RECEIVED BY GISCARD AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S

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ENERGY PROGRAM. I FOUND GISCARD OPTIMISTIC AND BOUYED
BY THE RECENT TURN OF EVENTS HERE. I HAD THE IMPRESSION
(BUT ONLY THAT) THAT RECENT RUMORS OF A CABINET SHAKE-
UP MIGHT BE TRUE AND THAT MORE POLITICAL PERSONALITIES
MIGHT COME IN FOR THE CAMPAIGN.

2. PRESIDENT GISCARD EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD

BE POSSIBLE TO RESCHEDULE PRESIDENT CARTER'S TRIP. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS FOR THE DELAY AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR A VISIT TO OCCUR PRIOR TO A TIME WHEN IT MIGHT FALL TOO CLOSE TO THE FRENCH ELECTIONS. GISCARD'S FIRST PREFERENCE WOULD BE FOR THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, JANUARY 5 AND 6, WITH THE STRICTLY SECOND BEST POSSIBILITY THAT IT COULD BE SCHEDULED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FOLLOWING WEEK ON THE 9TH AND 10TH. (APPARENTLY THE WEEKEND WOULD NOT BE A GOOD TIME BECAUSE THERE IS A LONG-PLANNED MEETING ON 7TH AND 8TH TO REVIEW GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS.)

3. IN DISCUSSING THE PROGRAM, PRESIDENT GISCARD REVIEWED THE DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE AND EXPRESSED HIS PREFERENCE FOR A CEREMONY ON THE FIRST DAY AT THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE FOLLOWED BY A TRAIN TRIP TO NORMANDY, WHERE THE TWO PRESIDENTS COULD VISIT STE. MERE EGLISE, THE AMERICAN CEMETERY AT OMAHA BEACH. HE SAID THAT THERE SHOULD ALSO BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT CAEN AND BAYEUX SO THAT THE PRESIDENTS COULD HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE SOMETHING OF HISTORIC FRANCE AND MEET ORDINARY FRENCHMEN. HE HOPED THAT AN ARRANGEMENT COULD BE MADE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PLANE TO USE A NEARBY AIRFIELD SO THAT THE RETURN COULD BE BY PLANE RATHER THAN TRAIN. THAT EVENING HE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A DINNER AND ENTERTAINMENT AT VERSAILLES AND HE HOPED THAT THE
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ADVANCE PARTY HAD NOW FOUND THAT THIS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE LOCALE AND NOT ONE WHICH WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE FOR THE PRESIDENT. IT IS A PLACE THAT HAS MANY FAVORABLE HISTORICAL CONNOTATIONS FOR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND, OF COURSE, IT IS A PLACE THAT FRENCHMEN TAKE PRIDE IN SHOWING TO THEIR GUESTS. ON THE SECOND DAY, PRESIDENT GISCARD WOULD HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL TALKS AT THE ELYSEE BUT THAT TIME COULD BE LEFT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE BUSINESS AND ANY OTHER APPOINTMENTS HE WISHED TO HAVE.

4. I RAISED THE QUESTION, IN CONNECTION WITH OUR DISCUSSION OF THE MIDDLE EAST, OF PRESIDENT GISCARD SENDING A MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT ASAD OF SYRIA TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSALS MADE FOR BEGINNING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. PRESIDENT GISCARD INDICATED THAT HE WAS STILL EXAMINING THIS QUESTION. HE STATED THAT FRANCE WISHED TO GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO THE UNITED STATES IN ITS EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST. HE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN, HOWEVER, BASED ON HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOUGH POSITIONS RECENTLY TAKEN BY BEGIN THAT A CONFERENCE

IN GENEVA MIGHT START BUT QUICKLY REACH A POINT OF DISAGREEMENT. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE APPARENT ISRAELI REJECTION OF ANY REAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK AND THEIR CONTINUED EFFORTS TO CREATE SETTLEMENTS IN THOSE AREAS. HE ONCE AGAIN MADE THE POINT OFTEN MADE TO US BY THE FRENCH THAT THE REAL PROBLEM WILL BE WHETHER SUFFICIENT PRESSURE CAN BE BROUGHT TO BEAR BY THE UNITED STATES ON ISRAEL TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. I SAID THAT I WAS SURE THAT YOU WERE WELL AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND THAT YOUR DISCUSSION UP TO THIS POINT HAD NOT BEEN PURELY PROCEDURAL BUT RATHER THAT YOU HAD SOME CONFIDENCE THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PROCEED, PERHAPS IN THE WORKING SECRET

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GROUPS, TO A DISCUSSION OF ALL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. I URGED HIM TO CONSIDER FAVORABLY OUR SUGGESTION FOR EARLY ACTION WITH THE SYRIANS AND MENTIONED, AS YOU HAD DONE WITH LABOULAYE, OUR APPROACHES TO MOROCCO AND SAUDI ARABIA.

5. ON THE POLISARIO, GISCARD SAID THAT HE FELT YOUR LETTER TO BOUMEDIENNE WAS A BIT TOO NEUTRAL. HE REPEATED AGAIN THAT IT WAS NOT A QUESTION FOR THE UNITED STATES OR FOR FRANCE TO TAKE SIDES IN THE POLISARIO DISPUTE ITSELF BUT RATHER FOR US TO EXPRESS OUR GRAVE CONCERN WITH A SITUATION IN WHICH INNOCENT CIVILIANS WERE BEING HELD HOSTAGE. I SAID THAT WE SHARED THIS CONCERN AND MENTIONED AGAIN THAT YOU HAD TAKEN THE MATTER UP WITH BOUTEFLIKA AND ALSO WITH DOBRYNIN. GISCARD ENDED THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT HE THOUGHT BOUMEDIENNE VALUED HIS IMAGE AS A WORLD STATESMAN AND THAT EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ON THIS MATTER WOULD HAVE AN EFFECT.

6. HE THEN SAID RATHER POINTEDLY - WITH YOUR INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS, IS NOT THE TAKING OF INNOCENT CIVILIAN HOSTAGES A RATHER FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. GISCARD MADE CLEAR THAT THE DEFENSIVE MEASURES FRANCE HAD UNDERTAKEN WERE NOT DESIGNED TO

MOVE AGAINST ALGERIA OR ATTEMPT ANY RESCUE WHICH WOULD BE BOTH POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY IMPOSSIBLE. THE MEASURES WERE DESIGNED TO PROTECT THE 3,000 FRENCH TECHNICIANS AND TEACHERS WORKING IN THE UNDISPUTED AREAS OF MAURITANIA.

7. I OUTLINED FOR THE PRESIDENT THE STATUS OF YOUR SECRET

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SALT DISCUSSIONS ALONG THE SAME LINES AS PRESENTED BY LES GELB IN HIS CONVERSATIONS THE DAY BEFORE AND I STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR THIS AGREEMENT. I PARTICULARLY OUTLINED THOSE ASPECTS OF THE AGREEMENT WHICH WE BELIEVE HAVE IN FACT MET EUROPEAN CONCERNS AND STRESSED THAT THERE WOULD BE FURTHER CONSULTATION ON THE REMAINING MATTERS WHICH AFFECTED EUROPE THAT HAD NOT YET BEEN SETTLED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. I ALSO MENTIONED THAT WE APPEAR TO BE MOVING TOWARD A CTB AGREEMENT AND GISCARD REPEATED HIS POSITION THAT HE COULD NOT GIVE US A TIME PERIOD DURING WHICH THEY WOULD HAVE TO TEST. BUT HE ADDED THAT FIVE YEARS ARE OBVIOUSLY BETTER THAN THREE YEARS IN SUCH AN AGREEMENT FROM THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW. HE SAID THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED A LETTER FROM BREZHNEV TALKING ABOUT VARIOUS DISARMAMENT MATTERS BUT PARTICULARLY TAKING THE U.S. TO TASK FOR CONSIDERING THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEUTRON BOMB INTO ITS ARSENAL. HE DID NOT STATE HIS OWN POSITION BUT THE TONE OF THE DISCUSSION DID NOT REVEAL CONCERN BUT RATHER AN IMPATIENCE TO GET ON WITH PREPARING FRENCH IDEAS ON DISARMAMENT - A PROCESS HE SEES AS TAKING TOO MUCH TIME AND THUS FAR SHOWING A LACK OF IMAGINATION. HARTMAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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